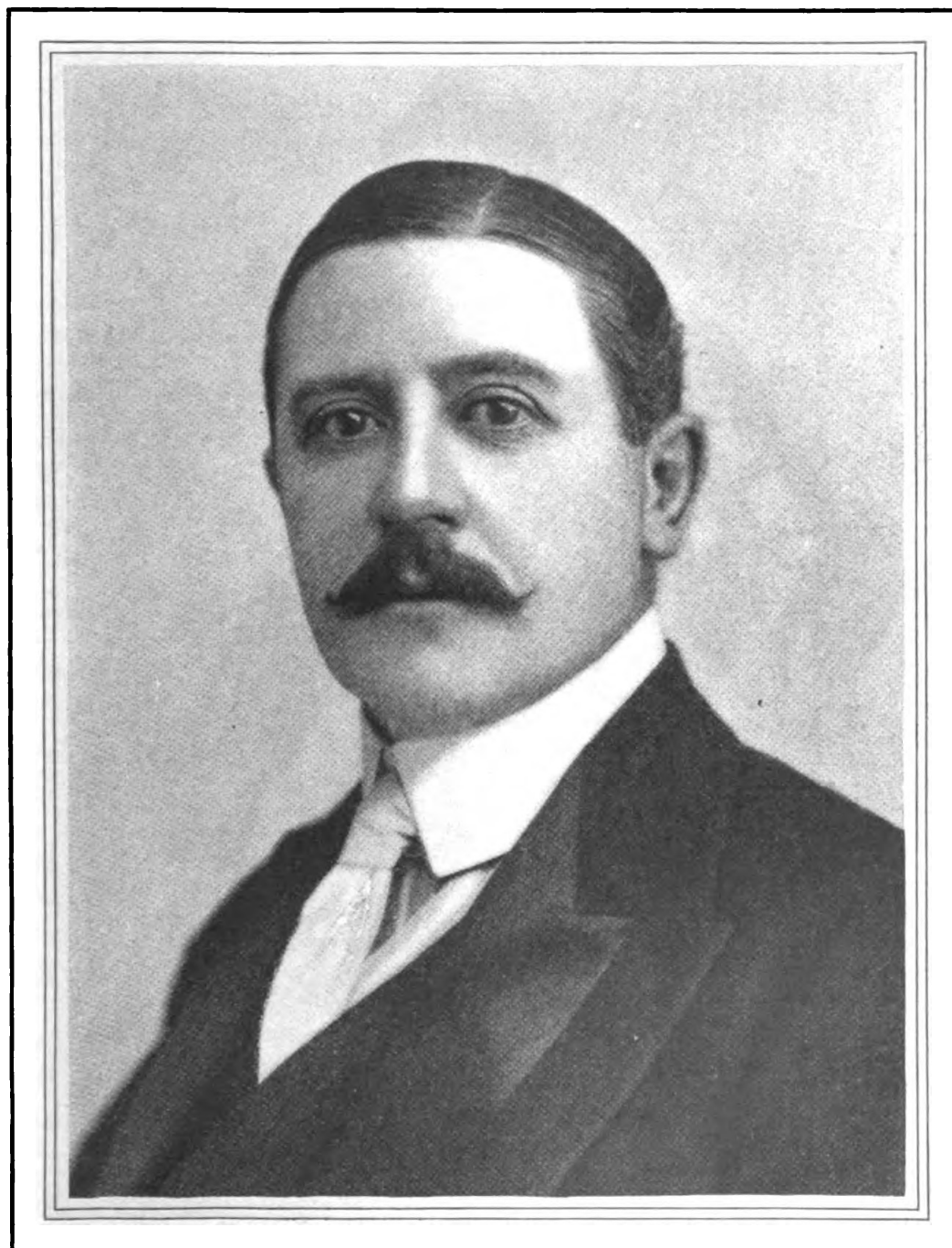


# THE STAGE

## A NOT UNCOMMON EXPERIENCE.

A few years ago a certain young man wrote a play. He believed it to be something extraordinary—a belief which is not at all extraordinary among play-

wrights. But the managers would not touch it. "Too extraordinary by far," was the comment of those who chose to put their opinion into words. "Your scheme, my dear sir, of having a man



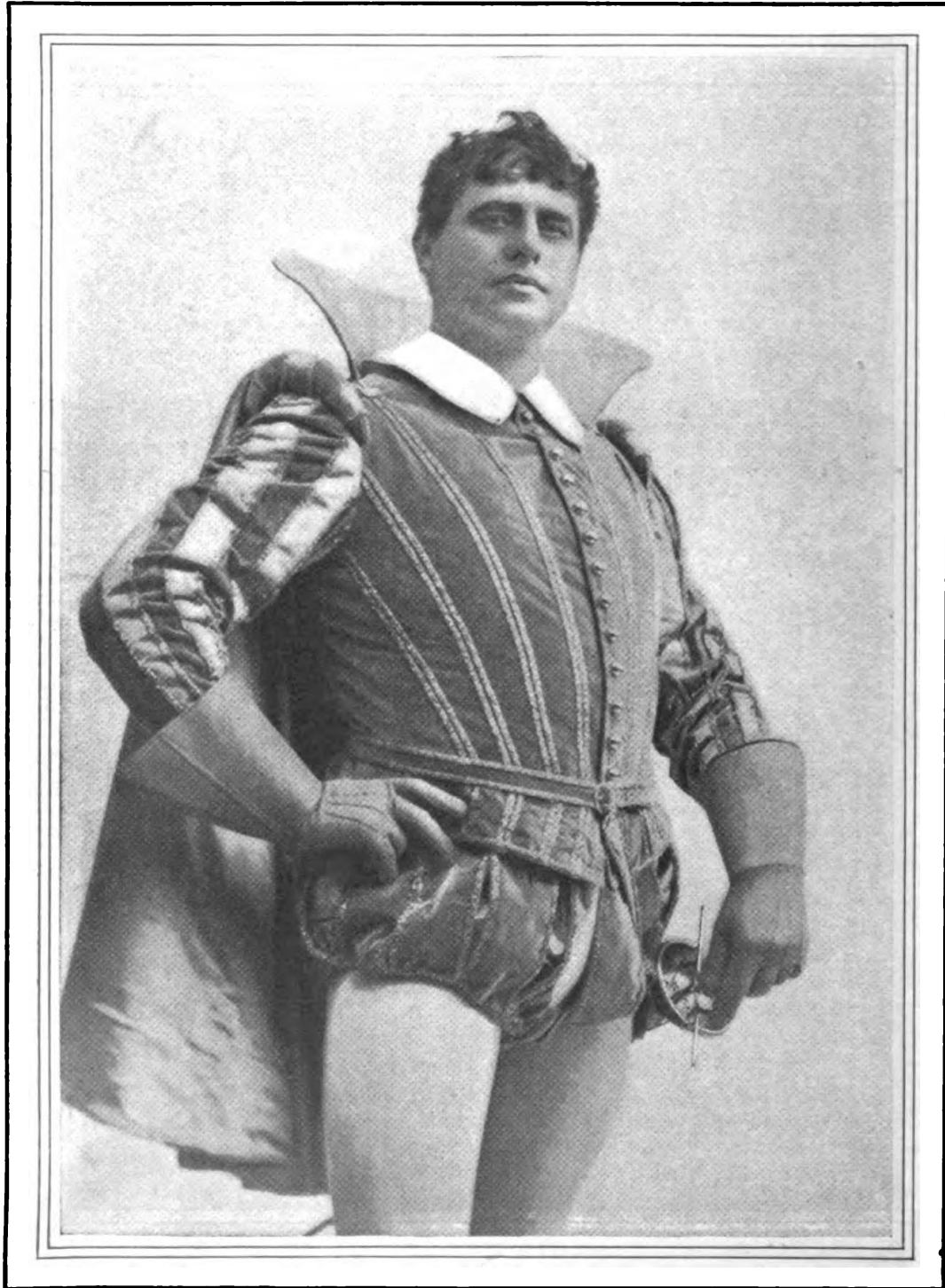
CHARLES HAWTREY, THE ENGLISH ACTOR WHO HAS MADE A LONDON AND NEW YORK SUCCESS WITH "A MESSAGE FROM MARS."

*From a photograph by Sarony, New York.*

converted from selfishness in a series of lessons taught him by a visitor from one of the planets has absolutely no dramatic value whatever. I am running a playhouse, not a church or a Sunday school class. And then to have it all turn out a dream in the end! Stuff and nonsense. No man on earth would invest a penny in the thing."

It was certainly apparent that no man on American earth was inclined to encourage the young author. He was an

actor, and had the part of the opium den keeper in the Chinese play, "The Cat and the Cherub." So when the company was sent to London he took his manuscript with him and tried to sell it there. And at last he found an Englishman who thought he saw something in the thing. It was an Englishman with a reputation, too—no less a person than Charles Hawtrey; and the play in question was "A Message from Mars," which, produced at the Avenue Theater, in



CHARLES DALTON AS "ÉTIENNE DE MAR" IN "THE HELMET OF NAVARRE."

*From a photograph by Sarony, New York.*

London, November 22, 1899, ran steadily until the spring of the present year. Brought by Mr. Hawtrey to New York in October, it entered upon another career of great prosperity, if unanimous praise from the critics and enthusiasm among the spectators are any indications of success.

So much for the inability of managers to judge a play from the manuscript.

Richard Ganthony, the author of the Hawtrey piece, is an Englishman by birth, but has lived for many years in America. He is a brother of the Robert Ganthony who wrote the comedy, "A Brace of Partridges," which introduced H. Reeves Smith to this country a few years ago. In "A Message from Mars" there is a great deal to catch the eye—a fact that has undoubtedly helped it to success. Mr. Ganthony's experience as an actor taught him the value of this element in play building.

To pass from author to star, Charles Hawtrey's father was a clergyman and a master at Eton. The son's first success on the stage was in "The Private Secretary," which was also William Gillette's bridge to fame. This is something of a coincidence, as many people find a similarity in method between the two men. Hawtrey, however, was not the secretary, but *Douglas Catmole*. Later he appeared in "Arabian Nights" and "Nerves." His new play, "The Man from Blankley's," the successor to "A Message from Mars," was the fashionable hit of London's spring season. He will probably cross the Atlantic again next winter, for a second visit, and will give America a chance to pass judgment



CLAIRE KULP AS "ANNE BOLEYN" IN "WHEN KNIGHTHOOD WAS IN FLOWER."

*From a photograph by Marceau, New York*

on it. The comedy—it is almost a farce—is by the author of "Vice Versa," and is altogether different in character from "A Message from Mars."

THE HERO IN "THE HELMET OF NAVARRE."

That the success of "A Message from Mars" should be so decided as to warrant an extension of time at the Garrick is matter for surprise to those theatergoers who have kept close track of the dramatic taste of New York and Lon-



ELEANOR ROBSON, LEADING WOMAN WITH KYRLE BELLEW, AS "MLLE. DE LA VIRE" IN  
"A GENTLEMAN OF FRANCE."

*From her latest photograph by McIntosh, New York.*

don. The English capital likes the serious piece, hence the four hundred night run of the "Message" over there; New York, as a rule, prefers the frothier article. "The Sign of the Cross" became the rage of England in the latter nineties; New York treated it with cold disdain, although on the road it has done a large business for several years. Wilson Barrett wrote the play while on tour here in 1875, and his *Marcus Superbus* became the talk of London. The part was taken in America by Charles Dalton, and some, who saw both men, declared that Dalton was the superior. Physically, he met all

its requirements, and the New York indorsements of his acting were all that any man could desire. But the piece was regarded as too serious for an evening's entertainment. Possibly the name was against it; a few years later, "Quo Vadis," on identically similar lines, succeeded in gaining more of a following.

Dalton now comes before the metropolitan public in new environment, as the hero in "The Helmet of Navarre." He admits a personal preference for costume parts, his favorite being *Mercutio*, in "Romeo and Juliet." An English actor, he first began to attract attention in



London in the melodrama "Master and Man," played here by Richard Mansfield. Robert and Bella Pateman, now with Hawtrey, were both in the cast. In 1891

One of the last things Dalton did before joining the "Sign of the Cross" company was the *Don Jose* to the *Carmen* of Olga Nethersole at the London Gaiety.



MARIE TWOHEY AS "GLADYS SOMERS," THE LISPING GIRL, IN "THE LIBERTY BELLES."

*From a photograph by Hall, New York.*



HARRY DAVENPORT AS "JACK EVERLEIGH," AN ANNAPOLIS CADET, IN "THE LIBERTY BELLES."

*From a photograph by Hall, New York.*

he lifted a thankless part into prominence in an Adelphi play without a villain—"The Trumpet Call," in which Mrs. Patrick Campbell, now due for her first visit to these shores, enacted a gipsy.

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#### THE CAREER OF MAUDE ADAMS.

What is the secret of Maude Adams' charm? She is not a great actress in the sense that Bernhardt is great; nor is she beautiful, like Maxine Elliott. Her wom-



CHRYSTAL HERNE, WHO IS "MARTHA REESE" IN HER FATHER'S PLAY, "SAG HARBOR."

*From photographs by Baker, Columbus.*



JULIE HERNE, WHO ACTED LAST SEASON, BUT IS NOW WRITING A PLAY OF HER OWN.

anliness would seem to be the answer to the question. In all her rôles Miss Adams conveys the idea of the wholesome and the honestly natural. And she is intensely feminine. There is no odor

of the limelight clinging to her garments.

Miss Adams was born in Salt Lake City something like thirty years ago. She is proud of the fact, too, and ordered



IRMA LA PIERRE, WHO IS "FLORA CAMPBELL," THE HEROINE, IN "THE BONNIE BRIER BUSH."

*From her latest photograph by Sarony, New York.*



MAUDE DURBIN, WIFE OF OTIS SKINNER, WHO IS APPEARING IN "FRANCESCA DA RIMINI."

*From a photograph by Baker, Columbus.*

the lawyer who drafted her will, to describe her as a native of the Utah town rather than of New York. Her mother, Annie Adams, was a member of the stock

Maude Adams made her first appearance as a child in arms, or rather on a waiter. Her first speaking part was *Adrienne* in "A Celebrated Case," when



MAUDE ADAMS AS "PHŒBE THROSSELL" IN HER NEW PLAY, "QUALITY STREET."

*From her latest photograph by Sarony, New York.*

company at the one playhouse the city then boasted. It was here that Brigham Young disdained to sit in a box, where the lines of vision are so poor, and had a rocking chair placed in one of the center aisles.

she and her mother were in John S. Lindsay's company. Her introduction to New York audiences was made as the schoolgirl in Hoyt's "A Midnight Bell" at the Bijou Theater. Charles Frohman noted her work, and secured her for his



stock organization, then at Proctor's. Her debut there was made as the ingénue in *Lost Paradise*." It was while she was doing *Dora* in a revival of "Diplomacy"



MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL, THE ENGLISH ACTRESS, NOW ON HER FIRST AMERICAN TOUR.

*From her latest photograph by Downey, London.*

"Men and Women." She enacted *Nell*, in the West, that Mr. Frohman saw in the cripple girl at the works, in "The her the capabilities that decided him to





KYRLE BELLEW AS "GASTON DE MARSAC" IN "A GENTLEMAN OF FRANCE."

*From his latest photograph by McIntosh, New York.*



HERBERT KELCEY AS HE APPEARS IN THE NEW PLAY, "HER LORD AND MASTER."

*From his latest photograph by Spellman, Detroit.*

intrust her with the important post of leading woman to John Drew in his first season as a star.

This was in 1892, and every playgoer knows of the great success won by the young woman from nowhere, as she was described then, who, in "The Masked Ball," divided the honors with Drew himself. The part was a "fat" one, to be sure, with an imitation drunken scene certain to rivet the attention of the audience. But to go through this without making it offensive, taking pains at the

same time to let the audience know that it was assumed intoxication—this was the task set the *Suzanne Blondet* of the comedy adapted by Clyde Fitch from the French of Bisson and Carré.

In the next Drew piece, "The Butterflies," she was *Miriam Stuart-Dodge*, and it was during this engagement that one of the last interviews she was permitted to give appeared. It was printed by a Philadelphia newspaper in May, 1894, and in answer to the question which of all her rôles thus far she liked the best,

Miss Adams replied that really and truly, in the bottom of her heart, she preferred one in which she didn't have a word to say—that of the gipsy in Lester Wallack's "Rosedale." She declared it was then she felt happiest and most important, because she could wave her arms

ing of the needle. It is known that Miss Adams has a warm spot in her heart for schoolgirls, who, in turn, are among the most enthusiastic members of her audiences.

The Drew play of '94 was "The Bauble Shop," with Drew as *Viscount Clive-*



BERTHA GALLAND, WHO IS STARRING IN "THE FOREST LOVERS."

*From a late photograph—Copyright by Falk, New York.*

about with all the freedom she craved. Strange to say, she confessed to a preference for her rôle in "The Butterflies" over the one in which she had made such a signal success in "The Masked Ball," although, as *Suzanne Elise*, Olive May had carried off most of the honors in the former play—the only occasion in all her later career in which Maude Adams has suffered an eclipse.

Two other things to which she confessed in the newspaper talk were a fondness for riding on horseback, and a loath-



GEORGIA CAINE, WHO IS "NORA" IN "THE MESSENGER BOY."

*From her latest photograph by Marceau, New York.*

brook, leader of the House of Commons, and Miss Adams as *Jessie Keber*, whose father, played splendidly by J. E. Dodson, was employed in a toy bazaar. The pathos and sweetness of this impersonation won the rapidly rising young actress a host of new friends. The next fall she was *Marion Dunbar* in "That Imprudent Young Couple," which had only a short run, and *Dora* in "Christopher, Jr.," which held the boards until January, when she became *Adeline Dennant* to Drew's *Mr. Kilroy* in "The Squire of





FLORENCE HENGLER, APPEARING AS "LORD JOCELYN"  
IN "THE SLEEPING BEAUTY AND THE BEAST."



MAY HENGLER, APPEARING AS "FLOSSIE" IN  
"THE SLEEPING BEAUTY AND THE BEAST."

*From their latest photographs by Marceau, New York.*



CYRIL SCOTT, WHO IS "CAPTAIN ARTHUR DONE-  
GAL" IN "FLORODORA."

*From his latest photograph by Marceau, New York.*



HATTIE WILLIAMS, LEADING WOMAN IN "THE  
ROGERS BROTHERS IN WASHINGTON."

*From her latest photograph by Sarony, New York.*



MAY ROBSON, APPEARING AS "MRS. BANG," MOTHER OF THE MESSENGER, IN "THE MESSENGER BOY."

*From her latest photograph by McIntosh, New York.*

Dames." This was the play in which that dainty little actress, since married and retired from the stage, Gladys Wallis, made such a hit as the child *Elsie*.

*Dorothy* in "Rosemary" gave Miss Adams another fine opportunity the following autumn, but Mr. Drew was obliged to take the play off in the heyday of its prosperity to produce "One Summer's Day." Luckily for her, Miss

Adams was not in this; Isabel Irving being cast for the lead. The play, although a hit in London, received the most scathing notices in New York. Thus the public was left with the pleasant "Rosemary" taste in its mouth when thinking of Maude Adams as John Drew's leading woman, for beginning with the next autumn she tried her wings as a star.





There is scarcely need to do more than mention "The Little Minister" to recall the enormous success achieved by the little woman who was so frightfully nervous on the night of her opening performance. Miss Adams underwent a similar ordeal at the three hundredth presentation in New York, which was made such an event as nearly to discompose the principal factor in it. The metropolitan run began at the Empire September 27, 1897; then, in order to make room for John Drew, the play was shifted to the Garrick, where it ran to packed houses until June 13. The next performance was the three hundredth, and, in celebration of the occasion, Mr. Frohman reopened the Empire for one night, in order that the star might finish her first New York season on the stage upon which it had been begun.

During her term at this house she had broken all its records for receipts. Nor was this all; she returned to New York with "The Little Minister" two seasons later and played for a long term to another succession of packed houses at the Criterion. Meanwhile, for a short period in the spring of 1899, she adventured into the domain of Shakspeare. No New York début ever made such a sensation as did her first night as *Juliet*, at the Empire. During the two weeks to which the engagement was limited, the "standing room only" sign stood at the doors of the theater every night, something unprecedented in the metropolis when Shakspeare was the bill. And yet nobody pretended that Miss Adams' playing of the famous lovesick maid was the greatest that had ever been given; she simply played the part in her own way, investing it with the charm of her personality. This was all that the public wanted. The *Romeo* of the occasion was William Faversham, who did not achieve so great a hit, however, as Hackett, in *Mercutio*. *Friar Laurence* was W. H. Thompson.

The following spring, when it was announced that Maude Adams was to play a male rôle in "L'Aiglon," the world of her admirers stood aghast. Surely she would lose all her magnetism, it was thought; for her sweet femininity was her chief attraction. But the event proved otherwise. Her frail little duke, son of the great Napoleon, was found to be as winsome a creation in its way as her *Lady Babbie*; and, playing against Bernhart herself in the part, she did the better business of the two. For the present season, she has gone back to the author

of "The Little Minister" for her vehicle, and in "Quality Street" has discovered a character in complete contrast to all the others she has played. It is promised that before the winter ends she will appear as *Rosalind*.

The story of "Quality Street" concerns itself with two sisters, living alone in an English town in the time of the Napoleonic wars. The younger, *Phæbe Throssell* (Maude Adams), imagines that a dashing doctor, *Valentine Brown*, is about to propose to her, and confides her belief to her sister *Susan*. But the man has meant to tell her only that he has enlisted in the army, and goes away without knowing the heart break, bravely concealed, that he has left behind him. Nine years elapse, the sisters have been impoverished, and are forced to teach school, with very little knowledge of the business. *Brown* returns a captain, and at first does not recognize *Phæbe* in her prim old maid's cap. After he has gone, *Phæbe* laments her lost youth, and suddenly resolves to win it back, which she does by dressing up in her best gown and letting down her curls. *Brown* again fails to recognize her, and, in a sudden spirit of mischief, she pretends to be a niece of *Phæbe's*. In this character she goes to the army balls, where, with her beauty and high spirits, she is the center of attraction. But *Brown* sees in her only the image of his old love. He tells her this one night, and then the sisters face the problem of getting rid of the niece. At last the captain learns their secret, solves the difficulty for them, and all ends happily.

The comedy is charged with the delightful atmosphere that Barrie knows so well how to create. Women predominate, just as men were to the fore in "The Little Minister." The last act is a little too long drawn out, but the piece has made a decided hit, and gives Miss Adams abundant opportunity to be seen at her best. Her new leading man is from England—Sydney Brough, a member of the theatrical family that recently sent us Fanny Brough. He has a fine voice and presence, and is well adapted to the part.

#### CONCERNING MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL.

The records of the playhouse contain but few examples of players who have been made, so far as public knowledge of them is concerned, over night. The most recent instance on our own boards was that of Henrietta Crosman, with her

*Nell Gwyn* at the Bijou last season after ten years of obscurity. Olga Nethersole did almost the same thing with *Camille* on the occasion of her first visit to America; she was but little thought of in England at the time, and came here practically unheralded.

May 26, 1893, is the birth night of Mrs. Patrick Campbell's fame, when she first played *Paula*, the title rôle in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," at the St. James Theater. The play was an absolutely new departure for Pinero, and was so frankly "problem" in theme that it was declined by John Hare, for whom it had been written. George Alexander finally secured it, but was at a loss for a woman who would fit the character of the heroine until his wife saw Mrs. Campbell at the Adelphi. Her father's name was John Tanner, and her mother was an Italian. They were rich while the daughter was young, and she had educational advantages; but financial disaster befell Mr. Tanner, and he emigrated to Texas to begin over again.

Meanwhile the daughter had married, and was the mother of two children before she was twenty. To help out with the bank account, and with the consent of her husband—since killed in South Africa—Mrs. Campbell decided to go on the stage. She made her London debut as *Rosalind* at a matinée in June, 1891, at the Shaftesbury Theater, and went along for two years in the humdrum rut of fifty other players working their way upward. Then came "Tanqueray," and she shot well up towards the top of the ladder in the space of three hours.

After that, however, it looked for a time as if she were destined to be a one part actress. When "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" had run its course, Mrs. Campbell was engaged to create *Dulcie* in "The Masqueraders"—played here by Viola Allen—but she could make nothing of it. Nor did she cause more than a ripple with her *Fédora* or *Juliet*. Her *Kate Cloud* with Beerbohm Tree in "John à Dreams" was better, and she came into her own again with *Agnes* in "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith." This drama was, in a sense, a triumph for Pinero, for, modeled on his "Second Mrs. Tanqueray," it was written to the order of John Hare, who had declined the former play.

For a while Forbes Robertson and Mrs. Campbell acted together, but latterly she has been starring on her own account. Last winter she brought out at the Roy-

alty a play by a new writer, Frank Harris, called "Mr. and Mrs. Daventry." Repulsive in theme, and lacking the sugar coating of clever dialogue that a Pinero can supply, the piece ran from October to February, and then gave way to a revival of "Mrs. Ebbsmith." It is doubtful whether the English actress will use it on her American tour, which she proposes to open with "Magda." It is quite likely that "Mrs. Tanqueray" will occupy the chief place in the repertoire.

#### ▲ MASCOT ACTOR.

Cyril Scott is looked on in the profession somewhat in the light of a mascot. He says himself that he has never played in a failure, but in making the assertion, his part of *Dick Major* in Belasco's "Younger Son" must have slipped his memory. This play was produced in the second season of the Empire, in October, 1894, and ran for only five nights. So brief a career doubtless accounts for the piece seeming to Scott as if it never was.

Scott is Irish by birth, a native of Banbridge, County Down, but his family almost immediately brought him to this country. He was seventeen years old when, in August, 1883, he made his first appearance on the professional stage at Paterson, New Jersey, in "The Girl I Love; or, The Diamond Mystery." After that he was with Mrs. Fiske, Mansfield, and Lotta, in such hits as "Caprice," "In Spite of All," "Prince Karl," and "The Little Detective." Going over to Sothorn in 1888, he struck another success, "Lord Chumley," in which he was *Hugh Butterworth*. "The Highest Bidder" and "The Maister of Woodbarrow" were other winners in which he appeared during this engagement.

In 1890 he joined the Charles Frohman stock company, playing then at Proctor's in Twenty Third Street, where they gave "Men and Women" and "The Lost Paradise," both big drawing cards. Then, in January, 1893, he was in the cast of "The Girl I Left Behind Me," with which the troupe opened the Empire. Scott played the young *Dr. Penwick*, and it is a coincidence that in the same cast was Edna Wallace Hopper, who also, like himself, deserted drama for musical comedy. Now in "Florodora" they are again together. After appearing in "The Councillor's Wife" and "Sowing the Wind," Scott decided that he would never get beyond juveniles if he stayed at the Empire, and surprised everybody by casting in his lot with comic opera.

His first essay was as the Columbia boy in "Dr. Syntax," when Edna Wallace Hopper was her husband's leading woman. But Scott went back to drama again, to create *Lieutenant Telfair* in "The Heart of Maryland," another popular hit. After that, Augustin Daly secured him for "The Circus Girl," and he was playing in "A Runaway Girl" when Mr. Daly died. Drama claimed him again then, and he was seen in the leading part of that queer play "A Stranger in a Strange Land," which is still on tour, by the way. Later he was "papa's son" with Anna Held in "Papa's Wife"; then the rôle played by Virginia Earl in "The Casino Girl" was rearranged for a man, and Scott was sent to London with the piece, where he played through the summer. This brought him up to his present part in "Florodora."

Mr. Scott is one of the most natural actors on our stage, thoroughly easy in his manner, and without that air of careless condescension which some juveniles think it incumbent on them to affect. Off the stage he is perhaps more serious minded than the generality of those in his calling, and carries little of the theater into his private life. He lives at Bayside, on the north shore of Long Island. He married Louise Eissing, who sang the part of *Gianetta* in "The Gondoliers" with the Castle Square Opera company some three years ago.

In "Florodora" Mr. Scott is in charge of the stage. This does not mean that he rings up the curtain and orders the scenes shifted, but that he is responsible for everything moving smoothly. Speaking of "Florodora," there is some discrepancy of opinion in the ranks regarding the exact status of the twelve people who compose the famous double sextet and warble about the "Pretty Maiden." Some contend that they belong in the chorus, while the proprietor stoutly avers that they are principals. The musical director likes to think that the entire piece is attractive, and will tell you that out of the twenty three numbers, eighteen are encored every night.

"Does that look as if the big hit was due entirely to the double sextet?" he inquires.

Nevertheless, drop that same feature, and note how quickly the attendance would fall off.

#### AN UNUSUAL BEGINNING.

May Robson's success in musical comedy emphasizes the versatility of an ac-

tress whose clever work in certain fantastic rôles created an impression that she had a specialty, and that her activities were confined to narrow lines. Miss Robson has been on the stage eighteen years, and many of these were passed in comparative obscurity. Yet she made a hit on her first appearance in a rôle of the sort with which she is usually identified.

The accepted rules do not apply to her. To begin with, no one would dream of asking her age. A woman who has grown up children, who can look to be no more than twenty five on the stage, and who is willing to make herself grotesquely ugly, is a theatrical rarity. While her eccentric characters have attracted most attention, perhaps the finest work of her life was her burlesque of Olga Nethersole's *Sapho*. She has gained success by hard work. She hesitated when she was asked to play *Mrs. Bang* in "The Messenger Boy," but accepted because she has the self confidence of an experienced player with original ideas, which makes it possible to avoid absolute failure, although it cannot always insure success.

It was not the enthusiasm of a stage struck girl that carried May Robson upon the boards, but the necessities of a widow with a child to care for. She was born in Australia, whither her father had gone in search of health, and where he died. The family returned to their home in England, and Mary Robison—to give her her maiden name—completed her education in Paris. She married when she was very young, and removed to New York. Then her husband, whose name was Gore, died, and she was left to provide for herself and three little children. She had a talent for painting, hit upon the idea of making dinner cards, and earned twenty dollars a week, until she started classes in painting. She taught so many how to decorate menus that the demand for her own work ceased, and after a little while the fad wore itself out, so she lost her pupils also.

The necessity for work led her into a dramatic agency whose sign had attracted her. Until she saw it she had not the slightest thought of going on the stage. In the room were several young women sitting around the wall, for all the world like an intelligence office. A Frenchman was endeavoring to make himself understood by the man in charge, or by anybody else, but with little success. Mrs. Gore stepped forward and inquired of the stranger in his own language if she could

be of any assistance. He welcomed her as an angel of mercy, and at once explained that he was one of the Hanlon brothers, and had come in search of a woman to play the part of a young French widow. It may be explained that there were "Hanlon brothers" of all nationalities at different times. Mrs. Gore threw herself into the breach and went about among the girls, interpreting for the actor, but for one reason or another none was found suitable.

Suddenly the Gallic Hanlon turned to her with the exclamation: "Excuse me, madame, but it may be you were looking for something yourself. You have just the appearance of the character I want the young lady to take." Mrs. Gore was in mourning at the time for two of her children.

"What should I have to do?" she inquired.

Hanlon explained, the agent was called into consultation, and the upshot of the matter was that she agreed to meet the other members of the company on the following Sunday at the Grand Central Station, ready to accompany them to Philadelphia. The salary would be a trifle more than she had been earning by her painting. She arranged to have her son—the Edward Gore now appearing in the double sextet of "Florodora"—cared for in her absence, and at the hour appointed reported at the station. She was introduced to the Hanlon brother whom she had not met, and who was an Englishman. In the course of the conversation, he inquired what parts she had been playing lately.

"Why, I have never played any," she replied.

"Never played any?" repeated Hanlon, throwing up his hands. "Do you mean to tell me that you have never appeared at all?"

"No, I have never acted, but I think I can do what is required."

"But, my dear young woman," returned Hanlon, "we could not think of taking such a risk! The part, short as it is, has an important bearing on the action. If you have been put to any expense, I am sure we shall be only too happy to reimburse you."

"No, there has been no expense," Mrs. Gore replied. "I was told that the clothes I was wearing would do."

The next day she presented herself again at the office of the dramatic agents.

"Why," exclaimed Mr. Brown, "I thought you were in Philadelphia!"

Mrs. Gore briefly related the facts in the case, whereupon the agent told her that he would try to get her something else to do if she would promise not to say that she had never been on before.

"But what am I to do when they ask me?" she demanded. "I—I am not very skilled in telling lies."

"Evade it," was the bland response. "You can surely manage it somehow."

So it came about that an opportunity arose for an ingénue in a new piece, "The Hoop of Gold," which was to be produced at the Grand Opera House, in Brooklyn. Nothing was said about previous experience. The rehearsals were held at the Salmi Morse Theater on Twenty Third Street, now Proctor's. When Leon Vincent, the stage manager, said to Mrs. Gore, "Take the stage," she looked at him helplessly. If he had told her to reach down the moon, she would have had about as much of an idea how to go about the process. She did not move, whereupon the old gentleman walked up to her and said:

"How long have you been on the stage?"

The crucial moment had come. The situation must be met. She twisted her fingers in and out, and finally began: "About—about—"

"About twenty minutes," Mr. Vincent answered for her.

"Well, I was going to say fifteen," she admitted, already seeing herself out on the sidewalk again. But, to her surprise, the good old gentleman simply told her to remain after the rest had gone, and then gave her a little private coaching in theatrical parlance. At the next rehearsal, she made a respectable showing as an ingénue.

Two days before the first performance, the supers were introduced, and while watching a girl who was to play a slavey, Mrs. Gore had an inspiration. The girl was excessively stupid, although all she had to do was to carry a kettle of hot water across the stage.

"Let me do that part, Mr. Vincent," asked Miss Robson suddenly.

"You!" he exclaimed. "Why, that is only a bit. You have a regular rôle."

"Yes, I know; but please let me show you what I could do. I could play the other, too."

The supernumerary was so dull that Mr. Vincent finally acquiesced in the new recruit's strange request. She arranged her own make up, and when the night of the first performance arrived was more



concerned about what she was going to do as the slavey than with her regular lines. One thing annoyed her at first. She had seen the house bill, and noticed that, owing to an error in the types, instead of being set down as Mary Robison—her maiden name, which she had decided to use—she appeared as “May Robson.”

“Don’t change it for worlds, my dear,” one of the actresses told her. “It’s big luck. That’s just what happened to Ada Rehan and Clara Morris.”

Her make up was a marvel. She knew nothing of grease paints, so, taking a leaf from her art experiences, she painted her face with water colors. So lifelike was the result that Mr. Palmer, the manager, had a portrait made of her in the part to hang in his office and labeled it “Starvation.” All she had to say was “Yes, ma’am. Yes, ma’am,” in response to a “Come, Tillie,” as she walked across the stage with the kettle. But when it came to the point, Miss Robson did not simply walk across; she dragged one foot after the other in the slipshod fashion she had noticed as the typical gait of the London serving maid in the Clapham district. The actress who played the mistress, thinking the newcomer had stage fright, interpolated the line: “Hurry, Tillie!” To which Miss Robson, nowise disconcerted, replied: “I am a hur-ryin’.” Then, as she slumped along, she contrived to spill some of the boiling water on the handle of the kettle, and her efforts to find a cool place for her fingers completed the conquest of the audience.

In brief, this bit made the hit of the evening. She was recalled with a storm of applause and cries of “Tillie! Tillie!”—for, not being billed, no one knew her by any other name. Critics came back to find out who she was, and the part was afterwards elaborated for her. Needless to say, she was cast for no more ingénues. It was not long before Daniel Frohman secured her for his Lyceum stock, where one of her early hits was made as the woman with the St. Vitus dance in “Nerves.” In due course she passed into the company of brother Charles at the Empire, where she awoke peals of laughter with her new slavey act in “Liberty Hall.” Two years ago she was “borrowed” by Weber & Fields to create the title rôle in “Sapolio,” their burlesque on “Sapho.” Last season she was the cook in “Lady Huntworth’s Experiment” and, later, the mother in law in “Are You a Mason?”

Some years since she married Dr. A. H. Brown, and she now lives in a cozy home on the upper West Side of New York. In her making up, she regards her face simply as a canvas on which to produce the effect she wishes.

Not many years ago, May Irwin had in her company a pretty young girl with black eyes, a slender, graceful figure, and a voice with a charming touch of the brogue in it. She was from Boston, and subsequently played minor parts in various organizations till her chance came to replace Josephine Hall in “The Girl from Maxim’s.” To borrow the language of the Rialto, she “made good”—a fact which led to Hattie Williams’ engagement as “principal girl” for “The Rogers Brothers in Washington.”

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Speaking of May Irwin, in default of finding a new play to suit her peculiar talents, she has gone back to “The Widow Jones,” with which she inaugurated her career as star. This was written by John J. McNally, dramatic critic of the Boston *Herald*, who prepared all the Rogers Brothers’ successes, and assisted in Americanizing the English pantomime “The Sleeping Beauty and the Beast.” This last—a “fairy extravaganza,” as it is called in New York—has turned out the biggest money winner the Broadway Theater has had the luck to house since the days of “Ben Hur.”

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New York is now without any music hall, with the exception of Weber & Fields’, devoted to burlesque, as distinguished from vaudeville. The three theaters given over to this phase of entertainment went out of the business in rapid succession during the autumn—Koster & Bial’s by demolition, the New York by the substitution of “Florodora,” and Hammerstein’s Victoria by opening its doors to Elsie de Wolfe and Clyde Fitch’s “Way of the World.” To judge by the beaming smile to be seen on the face of theater building Oscar, he has already found the so called “polite drama” a more satisfying article of merchandise than variety acts strung together under a single name and served in an atmosphere of smoke and beer. Meantime, the New York threatens to fill whatever void there may be in the metropolis by transforming its summer roof into a Winter Garden.